

Report of the Special Committee

Appointed to Investigate

*brief*

Charges Publicly Made

AGAINST

The National Association of

Audubon Societies

National Association of Audubon Societies, Inc.

1775 Broadway, New York City



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# REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO INVESTIGATE CHARGES PUBLICLY MADE AGAINST THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AUDUBON SOCIETIES

AT the annual meeting of the National Association of Audubon Societies, held in the American Museum of Natural History, October 28, 1930, upon motion of Senator Frederic C. Walcott, a committee was appointed to examine into certain charges which had been widely published concerning alleged acts and practices of the Association, which were asserted to be entirely foreign to the purpose for which it was formed. The Committee was asked to undertake such other investigations into the affairs of the Association as it saw fit.

The Committee, as originally appointed, consisted of Mr. Chauncey J. Hamlin, President of the Buffalo Museum of Science; Dr. Alexander Grant Ruthven, President of the University of Michigan and of Dr. Thomas Barbour, Director of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College. (A message from Dr. Ruthven says: "In declining to serve on the Committee I am anxious that my reasons be understood. I am entirely out of sympathy with the attacks being made on the National Association of Audubon Societies. Improvements can probably be made in this as in any organization, but suggestions for such improvements should be made the basis of study and debate within the organization itself rather than being presented to the public as an indication of improper management. The sole reason I could not serve on the Committee was the press of duties as chief executive of a large university during a period of adjustment.")

After a long series of individual investigations and much correspondence with various persons not immediately connected with the management of the Association, the Committee met at Dr. Pearson's office, June 24th, and made a long and thorough examination of the minute books, correspondence files, and accounts, of the National Association of Audubon Societies.

The Committee has not been approached by Dr. Pearson, nor by anyone representing him during this period of deliberation, nor has he made the slightest attempt to influence a decision. When asked, moreover, he has candidly thrown his cards on the table and answered in the frankest possible manner every question which has been put to him.

Dr. Pearson's critics have sought a hearing before the Committee but it was not formed with power to hold hearings and had no desire so to do, since the case of Dr. Pearson's critics is fully stated in certain pamphlets which have been given the widest possible publicity. These are, first, "A Crisis in Conservation," sixteen pages, issued June, 1929, and signed by Messrs. W. DeWitt Miller, Willard G. Van Name, and

Davis Quinn. The first two persons named were, at the time of publication, employees of the American Museum of Natural History; the third is completely unknown to fame, has never been conspicuous either as a bird-lover or conservationist, has not been a member of the National Association and, indeed, is a person who, when he visited the Association's headquarters, appeared under an assumed name and gave a false address. Mr. Miller is dead and his connection with the unfortunate matter needs no further discussion. Mr. Van Name still holds a position with the Museum and the following letter by the Director of the American Museum of Natural History should now be put on record in this connection.

STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
IN REGARD TO A PAMPHLET ENTITLED "A CRISIS  
IN CONSERVATION"

July 23, 1929

"The attention of the American Museum authorities has been called to a privately issued pamphlet entitled, 'A Crisis in Conservation.' Two of the three signers of this document are members of the scientific staff of the Museum and this connection has led a number of people to inquire whether the Museum approves of the views to which this pamphlet gives expression. The Museum wishes, therefore, to put itself on record in a manner which will leave no doubt of its attitude toward this publication:

"*First.*—The Museum was wholly unaware that this pamphlet was in course of preparation and had no knowledge of its existence until it was issued.

"*Second.*—The Museum not only does not approve of this pamphlet but believes that it will convey a wholly false impression of the existing state of affairs in the conservation of bird-life, and by discrediting the efforts of organizations whose records of achievement are unquestioned and worthy of all support it feels that this pamphlet may do much harm.

"After making careful inquiry, the authorities of the Museum find that, with the exception of the two signers of this pamphlet, the members of its staff whose experiences and sources of information entitle them to an opinion, agree that there has never been a period in the history of bird-protection when our laws were more far-reaching, better enforced or more strongly endorsed by public opinion. It is inevitable that some species of birds must vanish as the advance of an increasing population demands their haunts. But never before have such large sums been expended or such widespread efforts been made to stay the destructive agencies of the day. The Museum, is, therefore, of the opinion that the alleged 'Crisis in Conservation' exists largely in the minds of the authors of this pamphlet."

(Signed) GEO. H. SHERWOOD,  
Director."

The second pamphlet was entitled "Compromised Conservation," a sixteen-page pamphlet issued October, 1930, and purporting to be written by Irving Brant and distributed by the "Emergency Conservation Committee," Davis Quinn, Secretary. It does not seem worthwhile to go into the various details which show that this committee—so-called—is simply a small, self-appointed group representing nothing but certain personal interests; and there is little point in attempting to analyze the motives of the persons hostile to the Association, who have used this method of attack.

The charges really boil down to three. There is a preliminary statement of Senator Dill's, to the effect that the Society could claim no credit for aiding in the passage of the Norbeck-Andresen Bird Refuge Bill. It seems to us, however, that Senator Norbeck's evidence is of greater weight since he, above all others in the Senate, was obviously the one who knew most about those who had assisted in securing the passage of his own bill. We therefore quote a letter from Senator Norbeck; and, also, a speech made in the House of Representatives, by Congressman Andresen, co-sponsor of the bill—the day it passed the House.

UNITED STATES SENATE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

January 8, 1931.

Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson,  
1974 Broadway,  
New York City.

"Dear Dr. Pearson:

"I am sure all the members of the Committee on Public Lands and Surveys of the Senate, who visited the Everglades, appreciate the help which you were to the Committee in pointing out and naming for us the marvelous bird-life of the region which you have loved so long and which you are doing so much to preserve by means of your Audubon wardens.

"And I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the influences which you and the Audubon Association have exerted for the advancement of bills for bird-protection in Congress which I have sponsored. As an example, let me say I believe but for you and your National Committee on Wild-Life Legislation, the Norbeck-Andresen bill, providing for the system of Federal bird-sanctuaries, would undoubtedly have failed of passage during the closing weeks of Congress in 1929.

"Yours very truly,

(Signed) PETER S. NORBECK."

Extract from Mr. Andresen's speech:

"The National Committee on Wild-Life Legislation, officially representing all of the leading wild-life conservation organizations in this country, has rendered a distinct service to the people of America in its unselfish effort to secure the passage of this legislation. The officers of the Committee—Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson, of the National Association of Audubon Societies, as Chairman; Carlos Avery, of the American Game Protective Association Vice-Chairman; Seth E. Gordon of the Izaak Walton League of America, as Secretary; and the other members of the Committee—deserve special mention for their untiring work in behalf of the conservation of migratory birds. These men are here today to witness the realization of a long-cherished dream." (Congressional Record, February 9, 1929, page 3307.)

The claim that the Audubon Society has an interlocking directorate merits no further consideration than to say that the type of person represented by the directors of the Association is inevitably interested in more than one good cause.

The first charge concerns the alleged taking of "Gun-Maker's Money." Now, it should be stated in the interest of accuracy that this money was freely and generously offered without any conditions whatsoever; except the proviso that Dr. Pearson administer the Fund, and with "no string attached." Later, administered by another organization, the fund has accomplished most useful services. The Committee cannot agree that there is any moral turpitude involved in

being a gun-maker, and believes frankly that shooting out-of-doors is a normal exercise of healthy and intelligent men, has been so for all time, and will continue so to be. It is evident that the preservation of game is vitally dependent upon the interest of intelligent sportsmen more than any others, and while hoping at all times that rare and disappearing species shall be adequately protected, the Committee nevertheless agrees in principal with the excellent exposition of the Association's relation to the sportsman, as set forth in the highly intelligent statement entitled, "Conservative Conservation," published by Dr. Pearson in October, 1924 (being circular No. 9 of the National Association of Audubon Societies).

The money which it is alleged was given over twenty years ago to the Association, was rejected by the Board. Not a cent of this money was ever received. The vote of the Board on the offer was close, and an examination of the names voting on each side of the question reveals the fact that gentlemen of the highest possible standing voted on either side. At one meeting the sentiment was in favor of acceptance, at the next meeting the offer was refused.

The next matter concerns the relation of Dr. Pearson to what was once the so-called McIlhenny Duck Shooting Club project—an incident which occurred eight years ago in 1923. The principal evidence brought forward to prove the statement that the policy of the Association was one of indifferent inactivity is in the form of short extracts from letters addressed by Mr. Henry de Forest to Dr. Pearson—extracts which have been separated from their context. The correspondence between Mr. deForest and Dr. Pearson is here offered *in extenso*.

30 Broad Street,  
September 27, 1923.

T. Gilbert Pearson, Esq.,  
President, National Assn. of Audubon Societies,  
1974 Broadway, New York.

"Dear Mr. Pearson:

"Referring to our talk of yesterday afternoon I send you herewith as promised, copies of the letters of protest addressed by the Sage and Rockefeller Foundations to Governor Parker of Louisiana.

"I should also like to place upon record my position in this McIlhenny matter as I explained it verbally yesterday.

"You will recall how McIlhenny some years ago came to New York in order to obtain money for the purchase of Marsh Island; how he was introduced to my brother Robert W. de Forest and to me by Hornaday and our recommendation of the purchase to Mrs. Sage; my particular interest in the matter at the time and the investigation and report made by George Bird Grinnell, followed by Mrs. Sage's purchase.

"When McIlhenny again came to New York to obtain the money for the purchase of the adjacent and larger tracts he appealed to me in the first instance. It was I and not he who presented the matter to Mr. Starr Murphy to whom I afterwards introduced McIlhenny. I think it may fairly be said that their subsequent decision to buy this tract of land was largely because of my advice, influenced to some extent by the previous purchase of Marsh Island by Mrs. Sage, by Grinnell's report and by the opinion expressed by my brother and myself. In both of these matters I fully believed at the time that McIlhenny's only interest was in bird-conservation. More recently I have had good reason to doubt whether this was his sole motive. However, be that as it may, he certainly posed as an advocate of wild-bird conservation and when these two wild-bird refuges were given to the State of Louisiana, the Foundations arranged to have the gifts

made through him to the Governor so that he might receive full credit therefor. I mention these circumstances in order to make clear my connection with these two transactions and to indicate why I should feel as I do, a grave sense of responsibility to Mrs. Sage's memory, to the Rockefeller Foundation and to the public generally to do everything in my power to make sure that the objects intended by the donors are carried out and not defeated.

"Now as to McIlhenny's present plan. Briefly it proposes the organization of a monstrous club of 4,000 members to occupy some 80,000 acres of swamp lands immediately adjoining and largely lying between the Sage and Rockefeller bird-sanctuaries. It is admitted and in fact advertised in the club prospectus that this territory is to be baited and planted with duck food and the shooting privileges which will pertain to membership are emphasized in no uncertain language.

"The claim made by McIlhenny that such a project is in the interest of wild-fowl preservation is to my mind almost too ridiculous to discuss.

"He claims the threat of agriculture. Agriculture kills no birds. If it comes to this territory at most it would only decrease the coastal marsh to the extent it becomes used for this purpose.

"He claims further as a reason that there is at the present time unrestricted public shooting over this territory. This is true but anyone who knows anything about the habits of ducks and geese, and McIlhenny himself is a past master, knows how little real destruction is accomplished by unorganized and irresponsible public shooting of wild-fowl on marshes adjacent to large tracts of reserved marsh where no shooting is allowed.

"It may also be observed that in the former case until agriculture absorbs the territory and in the latter as long as present conditions continue there remains the possibility of acquiring these marshes for conservation purposes, a situation which will terminate with their acquisition by his club.

"Observe his alternative,—a club of 4,000 members occupying the territory between these two great sanctuaries, a baited death-trap drawing the ducks and geese from the protected area to the guns of 4,000 members or as many of them as may choose to come to the slaughter.

"McIlhenny knows the situation to be just as I describe it. In fact he has admitted it to me and what is his answer. He tells me that of his 4,000 members he plans to have shooting privileges attach to only 2,000 shares and these shooting members he expects to educate and train as bird conservationists so that within two to three years they won't care to shoot at all or only a little and will spend their time watching the habits and antics of the ducks and geese on the marsh. I almost quote his words. Do I believe it? Hardly. Can you? Can McIlhenny himself? I judge not.

"Nor is this matter an insignificant one. The purchases of the two Foundations aggregate approximately 164,000 acres acquired at a cost in excess of \$400,000. There are two other smaller bird-sanctuaries involved, both immediately adjacent, one dedicated by the State of Louisiana and the other given by McIlhenny and Ward. It is safe to say that the acreage on these four bird-sanctuaries exceeds 200,000 acres and with the 80,000 to 100,000 acres involved in the McIlhenny club scheme, they constitute in large part all that remains of the great Louisiana coastal marshes. These are the extreme southern resort in our country for the Mississippi Valley migratory flight of ducks, geese, shore and other migratory birds. The effective preservation of these wild-life refuges is therefore not only of great importance to the State of Louisiana but affects the entire Mississippi Valley, and adjacent country and Canada as well. I confidently believe that the McIlhenny plan involves doubtless not their entire destruction but at least serious and extensive impairment of their usefulness for the purpose for which they were given.

"Now we come to your connection and the connection of your Society with the McIlhenny plan.

"In a list of his Advisory Board sent me with his letter of August 2, your name appears at the top, not as an individual but as 'President, National Association of Audubon Societies, Member Advisory Board, United States Biological Survey.' I understand now from our talk of yesterday that this was done without your authority and during your absence in Europe, but as late as August 30, in my talk with McIlhenny he emphasized as one of his most important arguments that his plan had your full approval and the approval of your Society as an important factor in wild-bird conservation. I know

that similar statement has been made to various of my friends and I confidently believe that it has been sown broadcast wherever he has sought to advertise his club.

"Your Society has for many years occupied the most prominent place in the country as the conservator of wild bird-life and we have all looked to you for action and guidance in this direction. You also have had more than a passing connection with the establishment of the Sage and Rockefeller sanctuaries. In fact as you recall, at one time it was the desire of the Foundations to place them under the protection and control of your Society instead of the State of Louisiana. You will also remember that this plan would have gone through except for the unwillingness of the Rockefeller Foundation to make contribution to the proposed endowment fund to meet the expenses of guardianship and protection. You will also recall that in the deeds to the State your Society is brought in as arbiter in connection with any dispute which might arise after the donation to the State between it and the Foundations in regard to the proper and efficient protection of the bird-refuges.

"It therefore seems to me essential that we should know officially where you and your Society stand in regard to McIlhenny's club. Is it in the interest of bird-conservation or is it not? Is McIlhenny right in his contention or are we?

"Now that this matter has started I am being informed on all sides that you are for it. We should be placed in the position where we can either officially affirm or deny this fact and I feel that I am entitled to ask for a reasonably prompt reply.

"This request is made by me as an individual member of your Society, by my brother and myself as Executors under Mrs. Sage's will and by the Sage Foundation as well.

"Faithfully yours,

(Signed) HENRY W. DE FOREST."

Mr. Henry W. deForest,  
30 Broad Street,  
New York City.

September 28, 1923.

"Dear Mr. deForest:

"I have this morning your letter of September 27 in which you sketch the history of your connection with Mr. E. A. McIlhenny in regard to the creation of the two large Wild-Life Reservations on the Louisiana coast and express disapproval of his present plan to establish a hunting club between them. You further state that Mr. McIlhenny has claimed that this Association approves of his plan and you ask whether I, individually, and this Association officially, endorse this present enterprise.

"In reply allow me to state first what I know of the matter. Some time in the Fall of 1922 Mr. McIlhenny called at this office and told me he was planning to start a club on and around Pecan Island, Louisiana, where there would be golf, some shooting and other amusements; that his plan contemplated much increased protection to the wild fowl which resort to that region in winter. While talking he remarked that he hoped to have John B. Burnham and me associated with him. He did not ask me if I would serve in any capacity and I made no reply as the whole proposition was presented as something he was hoping to work out. I do not recall having heard further of the matter until returning from Europe in July of this year. I then learned from two or three sources that he was actually putting his plan of organizing such a club into operation and a report that he had stated that I was a member of his Advisory Board and heartily endorsed his plan. As soon as possible, viz., on July 31, 1923, I wrote him as follows:

'From various newspaper clippings that have come in of late, I see reference to your Pecan Island plan. Some of these suggest that your undertaking would be of much importance from the standpoint of wild-life conservation, others seem to indicate that your plan will be inimicable (sic) to the interests of wild fowl on those Louisiana Wild-Life Reservations, which through your efforts have in the past been established.

'I am told there is some report that my name appears among your list of members or in some advisory capacity, and that I whole-heartedly endorse the plan. This you, of course, know is not correct. When you called at the office some months ago and spoke in general terms about the plan you hoped to materialize, you incidentally made the remark that you wanted

me and Mr. Burnham associated with you in the effort. I did not understand this as a specific invitation, and I made no comment on the matter.

'If you still feel you would like to use my name in connection with your enterprise let me ask that you write me in detail just what you have in mind in the way of conserving wild life by means of the Pecan Island proposition, and also your opinion as to the effect which your Club shooting might have on the wild fowl frequenting the Wild-Life Refuges. Upon hearing from you along this line I would doubtless be in a position to say whether or not I might feel free to unite with you in such capacity as you may possibly have in mind.'

"Mr. McIlhenny replied that he had understood that I was willing to serve on his Board, laid much stress on the aspects of his plans for wild-fowl conservation and formally asked me to be a member of his Advisory Board. I sent copies of his letter to various members of the Board of Directors of this Association and upon receiving their replies wrote Mr. McIlhenny on August 17, 1923, declining his invitation to become a member of his Board. I have never given Mr. McIlhenny an endorsement of his plan. While it is possibly conceivable that the establishment of a club with 2,000 shooting members in the midst of these Wild-Life Reservations might, as he claims, in time result in increased protection of the wild fowl on the Louisiana Coast, I believe that establishing a shooting club under such conditions would lay his plan open to much hostile criticism. As to whether he can increase the wild fowl by such means is also to my mind largely doubtful. If his club is consummated (sic), of course, I earnestly hope that his expressed belief on this point may be abundantly justified.

"I have on two or three occasions visited the general territory under discussion and from my limited knowledge of the habits of the wild fowl in that section I admit that I cannot see the proposition in quite the light in which Mr. McIlhenny does. If the chief object in establishing this club is to conserve the wild fowl why not make it a clean-cut Wild-Life Reservation proposition? Could we not all get together and do this? Mr. McIlhenny has long operated in the role of a conservationist. The people in the country generally believe he has already accomplished much for bird-protection on the Louisiana coast. He knows many people of influence and means. I feel sure that this Association would be glad to join with you, the Rockefeller Foundation, Sage Foundation, Governor John M. Parker, McIlhenny and others in making this territory another bird-sanctuary.

"Answering your question finally, permit me to say that with such light as I have on the subject I cannot give my personal endorsement to the present Gulf Coast Club shooting plan. I cannot speak for the Association officially, but plan in due time to lay the subject-matter of your letter before the Board and ascertain their opinion, after which I shall expect to advise you further.

"With best wishes, I am,

Yours sincerely,  
(Signed) T. GILBERT PEARSON,  
*President.*"

30 Broad Street, New York,  
October 1, 1923.

"Dear. Mr. Pearson:

"I have your letter of September 28 in reply to mine of the previous day and I understand that the Rockefeller and Sage Foundations and Mrs. Sage's Executors are now authorized to deny Mr. McIlhenny's statement that you consented to be one of his Advisory Board and approved his plan for the establishment of the Louisiana Golf Coast Club as a move in the line of the protection of wild birds.

"We feel that we ought to be placed in a similar position at the earliest possible moment in regard to the attitude of the National Association of Audubon Societies. If it is not possible to call a meeting of your Board at an early date, is it not feasible to obtain the views of the members by sending to each a copy of my letter addressed to you? As I pointed out to you in my letter as well as in our previous talk, one, if not the most important, of McIlhenny's arguments is that he has the approval of your Society. If he has not and if we are right in our opinion about his club, a prompt denial seems to us essential from your standpoint as well as ours.

"With kind regards, believe me,

"Faithfully yours,  
(Signed) HENRY DE FOREST."

T. Gilbert Pearson, Esq.

30 Broad Street, New York City.

October 8, 1923.

T. Gilbert Pearson, Esq.,  
President, National Assn. of Audubon Societies,  
1974 Broadway, New York.

"Dear Mr. Pearson:

"I am in receipt of your letter of October 2 and I cannot allow our correspondence to end without a frank expression of the feeling of disappointment, deep regret and indignation entertained by myself and associates in connection with the position of indifferent inactivity you and your Society have taken in regard to E. A. McIlhenny's plan for the establishment of a gigantic shooting club to occupy a large tract of land adjacent to the bird-sanctuaries on the gulf coast of Louisiana.

"As I wish to make this letter a complete record of our position I restate my case against McIlhenny. He proposes the organization of a monstrous club of 4,000 members to occupy some 80,000 acres of swamp lands immediately adjoining and largely lying between the Sage and Rockefeller bird-sanctuaries. It is admitted and in fact advertised in the club prospectus that this territory is to be baited and planted with duck food and the shooting privileges which will pertain to membership are emphasized in no uncertain language.

"The claim made by McIlhenny that such a project is in the interest of wild-fowl preservation is to my mind almost too ridiculous to discuss.

"He claims the threat of agriculture. Agriculture kills no birds. If it comes to this territory at most it would only decrease the coastal marsh to the extent it becomes used for this purpose.

"He claims further as a reason that there is at the present time unrestricted public shooting over this territory. This is true but anyone who knows anything about the habits of ducks and geese, and McIlhenny himself is a past master, knows how little real destruction is accomplished by unorganized and irresponsible public shooting of wild fowl on marshes adjacent to large tracts of reserved marsh where no shooting is allowed.

"It may also be observed that in the former case until agriculture absorbs the territory and in the latter as long as present conditions continue there remains the possibility of acquiring these marshes for conservation purposes, a situation which will terminate with their acquisition by his club.

"Observe his alternative,—a club of 4,000 members occupying the territory between these two great sanctuaries, a baited death-trap drawing the ducks and geese from the protected area to the guns of 4,000 members or as many of them as may choose to come to the slaughter.

"McIlhenny knows the situation to be just as I describe it. In fact he has admitted it to me and what is his answer. He tells me that of his 4,000 members he plans to have shooting privileges to only 2,000 shares and these shooting members he expects to educate and train as bird-conservationists so that in two to three years they won't care to shoot at all or only a little and will spend their time watching the habits and antics of the ducks and geese on the marsh. I almost quote his words. Is this credible? I think not.

"This matter is not an insignificant one. The purchases of the two Foundations aggregate approximately 164,000 acres acquired at a cost in excess of \$400,000. There are two other smaller bird-sanctuaries involved, both immediately adjacent, one dedicated by the State of Louisiana and the other given by McIlhenny and Ward. It is safe to say that the acreage in these four bird-sanctuaries exceeds 220,000 acres and with the 80,000 to 100,000 acres involved in the McIlhenny club scheme, they constitute in large part all that remains of the Great Louisiana Coastal Marshes. These are the extreme southern resort in our country for the Mississippi Valley migratory flight of ducks, geese, shore and other migratory birds. The effective preservation of these wild-life refuges is therefore not only of great importance to the State of Louisiana, but affects the entire Mississippi Valley, the adjacent country and Canada as well. I confidently believe that the McIlhenny plan involves doubtless not their entire destruction, but at least serious and extensive impairment of their usefulness for the purpose for which they were given.

"The following briefly states the reasons why we feel as we do in regard to the position taken by you and your Society.

"Your Society is the representative national association 'for the protection of wild birds and animals.' You are collecting and spending large sums of money for this pur-

pose. When an important matter of this kind comes up it seems to us that you are in duty bound to take one side or the other of the dispute. If McIlhenny is right, you should stand on his side and endorse his plan. If we are right, you should be on our side, fighting with us to defeat it. In justice to the cause you represent there is no middle course. You have been intimately connected with the establishment of the Sage and Rockefeller bird-sanctuaries. When the Foundations failed in their effort to secure Federal Legislation placing these sanctuaries under the protection of the United States Government, they turned to your Society and planned to vest title in it as the next best alternative. This plan was not carried through only because the large sum required by you as an endowment fund could not be raised. Later when conveyance was made to the State of Louisiana your Society was named as arbiter in connection with any dispute which might arise thereafter between the State and the Foundations in regard to the proper and efficient protection of these bird sanctuaries. You have also visited the sanctuaries and have all along known their exact relation to the tract of land which Mr. McIlhenny proposes to have conveyed to his club.

"You were generally familiar with McIlhenny's club plan approximately a year ago when he discussed it with you in general terms and said that he hoped to have you associated with him. I understand that he claimed at that time that his club plan was in the interest of bird and game preservation. A protest or expression of doubt on your part at this time might or might not have prevented his going further but none such was forthcoming. It certainly would have prevented his quoting you and your Society for a long period of time as among his ardent indorsers.

"On your return from Europe in last July as I understand it, you were made acquainted with his plan in full particularity, receiving the prospectus to which I have referred. It is true that on August 17 you wrote him declining his invitation to become a member of his Board but it is equally true that previous to that time your name appeared at the head of the list not as an individual but in your representative capacity as the President of the National Association of Audubon Societies and as a member of the Advisory Board of the United States Biological Survey (sic). Inferentially at least it should I think have been apparent that he was using this with others as one of his principal arguments in favor of the alleged conservation feature of his club.

"I saw you on the afternoon of September 26 and in a two hours' talk I placed all this and other facts before you in much detail, telling you what position the two Foundations and Mrs. Sage's executors felt obliged to take in opposing McIlhenny's plan and telling you also that it had aroused a very general protest and opposition from various individuals and societies interested in wild-bird conservation. At the close of our interview I asked you what was the position of yourself and your Society and you told me that if I would write you a letter you would state it. I wrote you the following day, and I quote the reply to my question contained in the last paragraph of your letter of September 28.

'Answering your question finally, permit me to say that with such light as I have on the subject I cannot give my personal endorsement to the present Gulf Coast Club shooting plan. I cannot speak for the Association officially but plan in due time to lay the subject-matter of your letter before the Board and ascertain their opinion after which I shall expect to advise you further.'

"I wrote you again on October 1 saying that we felt we ought to be advised at the earliest possible moment in regard to the attitude of the National Association of Audubon Societies. I quote your reply of October 2 in full:

'I have your letter of October 1 this morning. Within the past few days I have received replies from five of our directors in reference to the McIlhenny plan. None of these approve of it, but some feeling has been expressed that we should not take formal action until the occasion of our next regular Board meeting, October 30. It has been suggested that Mr. McIlhenny will probably reply to the letters from the two Foundations mentioned and we would thus have all the facts before us at that time. We, as an Association, therefore could not be accused by anyone of taking snap judgment.

'On one point, however, I can make a positive statement. If anyone says that McIlhenny's plan has had the approval of this Association it is a

mistake, as our Directors have never had the matter formally brought before them and have taken no action whatever.'

"As you observe I am seeking to make this letter a very complete statement of our position and of yours and I do this for this reason. I have been asked and am being asked by various of my friends what the position of the Audubon Society is. This letter is intended to be my answer.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) HENRY DE FOREST."

RESOLUTION OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF AUDUBON SOCIETIES ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
19TH ANNUAL MEETING

October 30, 1923.

*Whereas*, Mr. E. A. McIlhenny of Avery Island, Louisiana has announced that he is forming a hunting club of not less than 2000 members, which will operate on the 80,000 acres tract of marsh land lying between the Rockefeller Wild-Life Reservation and the State Wild-Life Reservation near Vermillion Bay, Louisiana, and in the immediate neighborhood of Marsh Island Reservation purchased by Mrs. Russell Sage some years ago.

*Whereas*, in the propaganda literature sent out by Mr. McIlhenny the project is advertised as "America's Last Great Hunting Ground."

*Whereas*, both the Rockefeller and the Sage Foundations have entered strong protests against the establishment of this enormous hunting club in the very midst of these wild-fowl sanctuaries.

*Be It Resolved*, that the National Association of Audubon Societies, assembled in Annual Meeting in New York City, publicly go on record in expressing its disapproval of this project, hoping that public opinion will be so strong that Mr. McIlhenny will desist in his efforts, and that a way may be found to make of this region a wild-life sanctuary, similar to the adjacent territories.

*Be It Further Resolved*, that the foregoing resolution be incorporated in the official minutes of this meeting, and that it be given any publicity that promises influence for conservation.

Committee { G. CLYDE FISHER, *Chairman*  
WINTHROP PACKARD  
BEECHER S. BOWDISH

Not only the members of the Association but the Board of Directors went on record in this connection in the following words:

"The President laid before the Board the subject of the proposed Louisiana Gulf Coast Shooting Club, the organization of which is now being attempted by E. A. McIlhenny. It was the feeling of those present that a hunting club of 4,000 members lying in the midst of the three wild-life reservations of the Louisiana coast would be a severe menace to the wild life resorting to that region in winter. Upon motion of Dr. Palmer, seconded by Mrs. Wright, William P. Wharton, Secretary of the Association, was asked to prepare and forward to the President of the Club a resolution expressing the feeling of the Board of Directors in this matter."

The third principal charge is a long and rather turgid tirade against Dr. Pearson, based upon the fact that he had been "cooperating with the killers." Most of the material presented is similar to that which everyone who has had any part in dealing with the activities of the so-called "zoophile cults" recognizes immediately. The zoophile may be defined as one whose arguments are always based on sentiment and not on reason, who with entire honesty believes that if a forest is to be protected and preserved, no tree should ever be cut down, and who believes that no species of bird or animal can be adequately protected if any individual of the species is ever killed. With this statement of the case, the Committee concludes that it is not worth-while to attempt to analyze or discuss the charges made. They are not worth the time it would take. Those, however, who are anxious to examine Dr. Pearson's record in this connection, we would ask to read his pamphlet entitled "The Case of the Hawk" (being circular No. 17 of the National Association of Audubon Societies).

The National Association is accused of failing to support bag-limit reduction bills, introduced in Congress. In this connection it may be well to recall the words of former Governor Alfred E. Smith in his annual message to the Legislature of New York State in 1927: "Year after year the Legislature is flooded with bills fixing by laws the size, condition, manner, method of, and the season for, the taking of fish and game of all kinds within the State. It is a deliberate waste of the time of the Legislature. Why not pass a general law conferring authority upon the conservation commissioner to fix these matters entirely by rule and regulation rather than have the time of the State taken up in fixing them by law? . . . Why not let him pass upon the whole subject in the first instance and save the State of New York the expense and annoyance of writing these rules and regulations into the statute law of the State?" The matter of bag-limits is an administrative problem—not an executive one. Such matters should no more clog the machinery of National Government than of State Government.

The Committee has also examined the relation which Dr. Chapman has to the National Association of Audubon Societies through his ownership of *Bird-Lore*, and having examined the financial accounts, finds that Dr. Chapman furnishes each second month to the Society—at the actual cost of manufacture, publication and mailing, without making any charge for personal editorial service or management—the requisite number of copies of *Bird-Lore* to supply its membership. The Committee believes that the Audubon Society, its membership and all bird-lovers should feel deeply indebted to Dr. Chapman for this splendid piece of unselfish cooperation.

In the beginning, the primary purpose of the Society was to secure legislation to protect song and insectivorous birds on account of a presumed value to agriculture and a universally recognized aesthetic appeal. This legislation—very largely through the efforts of the Association—is now upon the statute books of the several states. Appreciation of the beauty which our song-birds bring into many gray

lives, and the increased pleasure which derives from their observation afield by those who are able-bodied, are fast increasing. This is as it should be.

Our people as a whole are growing more intelligent and are possessed of an increasing love of outdoor life. Change in fashions and economic conditions have aided greatly in vastly reducing plume hunting within the United States and the Herons have increased beyond the fondest dream of anyone who knew their perilous status twenty-five years ago. So with the passing years the principal aims of the Society have naturally changed and today the dissemination of information which causes more people to become interested in bird-study—both young people and old—is the most important purpose which the Association can serve.

We believe that the Association has served a most creditable purpose. We believe that it has accomplished great ends—and that the funds entrusted to it have been well expended. When people join its membership but a few days before an annual meeting—some who have vilified it for years and are simply actuated by a desire to stir up strife, to attack the good name of its officers, and to belittle its adequacy,—one can understand how such an association may well wish to be examined impartially and also to engage in self-examination. After a full investigation we feel that the Society may be proud of a great record and that such trifling missteps as have possibly been made from time to time are due to the inevitable frailties of mere men.

It is not in empty words that Senator Norbeck expresses his appreciation of the influence the National Association has exerted for the advancement of bills for bird-protection in the Congress of the United States.

(Signed) THOMAS BARBOUR.  
CHAUNCEY HAMLIN.

August 19, 1931.





# National Association of Audubon Societies

For the Protection of Wild Birds and Animals

Founded 1901 — Incorporated 1905

T. GILBERT PEARSON, LL.D., *President*  
THEODORE S. PALMER, M.D., *1st Vice-Pres.*  
FRANK R. OASTLER, M.D., *2nd Vice-Pres.*



WILLIAM P. WHARTON, *Secretary*  
ROBERT CUSHMAN MURPHY, D.Sc., *Treasurer*  
SAMUEL T. CARTER, Jr., *Attorney*

Home Office  
1775 BROADWAY  
New York, N. Y.

## ACTIVITIES

### LEGISLATIVE

Active in State and Federal legislation for Wild Bird and Animal Protection.



### SANCTUARY

Owens and maintains various bird sanctuaries and game refuges.



### LECTURE

Audubon lecturers address thousands of audiences annually.



### CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL

Organizes annually over 350,000 children into bird-study clubs.



### PUBLICATION

Bird pictures, leaflets, bulletins and magazine, *Bird-Love*.



### COOPERATION

Cooperates with Federal, State and Conservation Society officials.



### INTERNATIONAL

Is affiliated with bird protective societies in twenty-three foreign countries.



September 1, 1931.

To the Members of the  
National Association of Audubon Societies:

At the Annual Meeting of this Association held in the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, on October 28, 1930, President Pearson requested the appointment of a committee to investigate certain charges which had been made against the Association. Upon motion of Senator Frederic C. Walcott, a committee, composed of Chauncey Hamlin, President of the Buffalo Museum of Science; Thomas Barbour, Director of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College; and Alexander G. Ruthven, President of the University of Michigan; was appointed for this purpose.

The report of this committee was handed to us under date of August 19, 1931, and we beg to submit to you herewith copy of this report for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM P. WHARTON, SECRETARY

For the Board of Directors.

